

Communication Strategy and Outreach Plan 2003–2004

October 2003



Zero Waste—You Make It Happen!

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I. Introduction

For the California Integrated Waste Management Board to meet future goals and mandates, public awareness and acceptance is essential. A communication plan and outreach strategy that fosters such a consensus is a vital component of future successes and accomplishments. More than simply a collection of decisions about themes, messages, and tools, a communications strategy focuses the responsibilities of the organization. Focused communication efforts help constituents understand clearly what is being communicated, how they benefit and how they can help.

The Board's Office of Public Affairs (OPA) recommends a new communication strategy as the public relations/education infrastructure with which to achieve future resource management goals that protect the public health and environmental safety.

What is a Communication Strategy?

- It is a tool to connect the Board's Strategic Plan goals with its mission to educate the public about environmental issues and resource conservation.
- It creates and reinforces close ties with division programs to support the direction of the Board.
- In partnership with the Board's many audiences and constituents, it is a business plan that will lead to a cleaner, safer, more resource-efficient California.

This strategy is not the daily operational manual for communications at the Board; rather, it represents an overall view of our desire for deep interconnectivity between all Board programs with a consistent theme. The purpose of the plan is to assist the Board in achieving newly defined strategic goals through effective communication with government, businesses, and consumers using all communication methods and outreach opportunities.

Changing Realities

One of the most significant realities facing the Board is that it has progressed beyond its original mandate and mission—the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989. Because of the hard work of Board staff and the tremendous successes of the Board's programs, California has achieved an overall diversion rate of 48 percent, one of the highest diversion rates in the nation.

That in no way means our work is done. What seemed like a lofty goal in 1989 must now be looked at as a springboard for future successes as we enter the 21st Century. With some jurisdictions reporting diversion rates as high as 90 percent, we know that as a state we can and must do better. As the population of California continues to grow, so does the problem of how to manage the by-products of that growth with the reality of diminishing landfill capacity.

This plan offers up a new rallying cry—“Zero Waste, You Make It Happen”—as the public relations springboard to help carry the Board to new levels of public service in the 21st Century.

Charting Our Course

A clear, steady course is needed for the Board to maintain and build upon its outstanding commitment to public service and environmental protection.

In our work to increase awareness about resource conservation, as well as the protection of public health, safety, and the environment, we are competing with many demands upon the time and attention of our varied audiences. Effective, unified, and coordinated communication therefore is critical to meeting the goals and mission of the Board.

To reach the next level of resource management—Zero Waste—this communication plan seeks to:

- Make the most of existing resources.
- Foster positive working partnerships—both internally and externally.
- Direct consistent, unified, coordinated messages to our various audiences.

II. Goals and Mission

The objective of this communication strategy is to create a cost-effective campaign that will serve to strengthen the identity of programs under the Board’s authority, unify its outreach efforts, continue to educate California residents and businesses, and showcase California’s waste prevention and diversion efforts and successes.

The California Integrated Waste Management Board has two primary roles—protecting public health and safety and the environment through oversight of solid waste facilities,

and spearheading California's waste diversion efforts. As part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, we are the State's primary recycling agency.

With divisions dedicated to landfill safety, waste prevention and market development, the management of special wastes (such as used oil and tires), and assistance to local governments in meeting waste diversion mandates, the Board has broad responsibilities. Our programs affect every resident, business owner, school child, industry, and municipality of this state.

Strategic Plan: The Big Picture

In its 2001 Strategic Plan, the Board set priorities for the next five to ten years, emphasizing:

- Market development.
- Education and public participation.
- Public health and safety.
- Environmental justice.
- Setting long-term sights on a Zero Waste philosophy.
- Place an emphasis on the purchase of recycled content products.

III. Communication Strategy

Individual programs often develop and implement their own communication and outreach efforts. For instance, funding for used oil program public awareness and advertising efforts has traditionally been allocated in an annual expenditure plan reviewed and recommended to the Board by its Market Development and Special Waste Committee (now the Special Waste Committee). This committee has also formulated the Board's five-year tire plan, which identifies tire fund expenditures for communication and outreach activities. Other programs receive support from the used oil and tire recycling funds through these annual allocations and the contract concept process.

Problem: Uncoordinated Communication

Public information and advertising expenditures—in dollars and human resources—are allocated by the Board on a program-specific basis, resulting in the expenditure of significant resources annually, without the benefit of a coordinated analysis of these resources.

Solution: Communication Oversight

A systematic review of all Board outreach programs would identify opportunities for internal cooperative marketing activities and efficiencies, and insure consistent and uniform branding of these efforts across all programs.

The Board's new Education and Public Outreach Committee will discuss and provide recommendations on a variety of Board-wide outreach agenda items. Outreach does not begin or end with OPA; it includes a wide range of efforts across the Board that must be coordinated with precision and consistency. As the Board's new "eyes and ears" on communication activities, the Committee is positioned to provide guidance on the overall coordination and use of the Board's outreach resources.

OPA has initiated the Marketing Task Force to help guide the content, timing, integration and consistency of all messages generated by Board programs. The task force—which includes representatives from each of the Board's program divisions—held an initial meeting on April 1, 2003, and will meet quarterly to address communication issues with the goals of promoting efficient use of resources; avoiding duplication of effort in outreach, travel, and printing budgets; and reinforcing appropriate identity standards.

This communication strategy recommends a number of new, high-visibility advertising and communication efforts commensurate with available funding and staffing resources. OPA proposes to fully integrate this strategy into ongoing efforts, which include, but are not limited to:

- News/media contact.
- Public relations activities.
- Board member communication and speech preparation.
- Oversight of the Board's Web site.
- Review and editorial services for all board publications.
- Design and distribution of Board publications.
- Development and coordination of media events.
- Marketing and promotion of Board-sponsored programs.
- Coordination of exhibits and exhibitor services for trade shows and conferences.
- Video documentation of Board-sponsored events.
- Production and development of broadcast quality videos and video news releases (VNR).
- Development and coordination of videoconferencing capabilities.

IV. Current Outreach

Recycled Product Market Development

Several market-based programs at the Board currently support our market development goal, including the Recycled Product Trade Show, State Agency Buy Recycled Campaign, the Web-based recycled-content product database and RecycleStore Web site, as well as the Recycling Market Development Zone and loan programs, and green building efforts. In the past, Board programs such as CalMAX, WRAP, and the used oil program have established strong identities.

Trade Shows and Conventions

Attendance at and coordination of trade shows and conventions are other existing services provided by OPA. This communication plan recommends, where feasible and in keeping with budget requirements, that the Board continue to have a presence at major events as part of an overall marketing effort and to promote public education. For example, OPA will maintain its close collaboration with the Board's buy recycled staff to attract other industries to the annual Recycled Product Trade Show.

Outreach Support

To provide better outreach, OPA has expanded cooperative efforts with local governments, waste companies, and others who staff booths at their local county fairs and trade shows, providing materials and information to spread the word about the Board's mission. Pre-packaged boxes of literature are sent when Board staff is not available to attend an event; local exhibitors then distribute the materials. OPA will continue to ship these "outreach-in-a-box" kits throughout California and especially to Southern California. Soon we will be adding new educational and technical resources Web pages to assist venues, events managers and local governments in developing waste diversion and recycling programs at venues and special events.

Award Programs

The Board offers a number of annual award programs that promote our mission and goals. These award programs recognize various constituents and stakeholders, such as schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, State agencies, and local governments.

- **WRAP** (Waste Reduction Awards Program)—honors California businesses for exemplary waste reduction efforts in the workplace.
- **STARR** (State Agency Recycling Recognition)—honors State agencies for reducing waste, recycling, reusing materials, and buying recycled-content products.

V. Resources

The Board’s Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is a resource available to all Board employees, at all levels of the organization. For any project involving communication issues or needs—internal or external—OPA provides assistance to promote the Board’s programs and objectives.

The Office of Public Affairs has a staff of specialists with expertise in all aspects of communications work:

- Media relations
- Video production
- Graphic design
- Copy writing and editing
- Publications and printing
- Outreach and community relations
- Web design and content oversight

OPA handles media inquiries, oversees the design and printing of Board publications, and manages content of the Board’s Web site. These are all areas where the office’s role has been clearly established. In other areas, where consistency remains equally important—such as the design and production of advertising and promotional materials, and advanced planning of public outreach activities—program staff does not uniformly seek OPA’s involvement. We have an opportunity to promote increased internal coordination and access to OPA’s consulting services to maximize the Board’s resources.

VI. Conclusion

The strategy is simple. The Board must unify and coordinate all of its program messages with a single theme, “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen.” OPA must ensure that every division is a part of that theme. By doing so, the Board will improve the effectiveness of

each program's discreet message. Program messages will benefit each other through the overlap, thus increasing both the effective reach and breadth of each message.

OPA recommends developing an inventory of program-level advertising and public awareness efforts. With assistance from OPA, program divisions would identify successful marketing activities in a standardized format, describing target audiences, messages, distribution and evaluation methodologies, and resource allocation.

These marketing plans would then be reviewed and evaluated by the executive staff's Marketing Task Force, and presented to the Board's Education and Public Outreach Committee to help guide the budget allocation process.

VII. Proposals

Logo

All informational publications produced by OPA will display the Board logo and Zero Waste theme on the front.

Branding the Board

Given the Board's limited resources, the most effective way for the Board to gain the kind of repetition and penetration necessary to brand the Board and its programs is to require and/or encourage stakeholders, including those subject to the Board's authority, to carry the Zero Waste message in their communication efforts. The Board has long played a leadership role in protecting the environment, while helping ensure the health and safety of the public we serve. A strong Zero Waste message helps solidify that leadership role.

Targeting Communication

Targeting communication at a specific audience increases the effectiveness of the Board's limited resources and improves the potential for measurable results. All public awareness and educational materials should be crafted to deliver focused messages to specific audiences, and delivered by the means determined most likely to reach the audience. In coordination with the Marketing Task Force, OPA will assist the Board's programs in identifying and segmenting target audiences, and developing effective messages and delivery methodology.

Informational Newsletters

The Board's Diversion, Planning and Local Assistance (DPLA) Division produces and disseminates a quarterly newsletter, *infoCycling*, to reinforce the importance of diversion and the continuing expectations of local jurisdictions. OPA will work with DPLA to enhance *infoCycling*, which is distributed to local governments and haulers, and to consider whether such a publication should be expanded to all statewide consumers.

To encourage consistent and comprehensive outreach locally, OPA will develop a downloadable newsletter template for the Web site, as a communication resource for local program operators and haulers.

Signage

The Board should develop and implement requirements, including any needed changes in regulation, for signage by permitted solid waste and waste tire facilities, certified oil recycling centers, all cleanup projects, and all grant and loan recipients that includes the Board's logo and the Zero Waste message. The Board's program divisions should propose revisions to existing boilerplate requirements to include this provision.

All events sponsored or co-sponsored by the Board must predominantly display a sign or banner with the Board's name and logo.

Small Business Recognition

OPA proposes that the Board initiate a program to recognize the efforts of small businesses that are contributing to the Zero Waste goal. This is not intended as an application-based process (like WRAP); instead it would be operated more informally (e.g., a simple letter of recognition from the Chair's office with a window decal carrying the Zero Waste message).

Green Labeling

In conjunction with the Board's buy-recycled program, OPA proposes that the Board explore developing some form of green labeling to identify, for consumers, products that incorporate recycled content. Such an effort could promote voluntary efforts to increase the use of recycled materials in consumer products, similar to the ENERGY STAR® program of the USEPA and Department of Energy.

Other Options

Campaign development should examine a variety of techniques that could include, but not be limited to:

- Advertising and editorial boards.
- Earned (free) media campaign utilizing news conferences and releases (including VNRs), media advisories, and press events.
- Public relations, customer testimonials, feature articles, and op-ed pieces.
- Tradeshows and conventions.
- Direct marketing with the support of local programs, program partners, colleges, and universities.
- Speakers bureau for Board Members, senior staff, and corporate and government partners.
- Integration with economic and business development, integrated waste management, and environmental program communication activities at the local, regional, and state level.

Ethnic Community Outreach

A multicultural approach to advertising and outreach will help the Board achieve its overall environmental justice goals, reaching established ethnic communities that currently may not be receiving the integrated waste management message clearly. Outcomes from current work being done under contract by the Center for Justice, Tolerance & Community at UC Santa Cruz and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts should be used to guide this effort. OPA will identify and evaluate existing demographic research and apply appropriate findings into the communication strategy; however, any new primary research would require additional funding.

Electronic Outreach

The Board needs to continue the trend of electronic communication with its stakeholders and target audiences. Possibilities exist to reach large numbers of the public through listserves (e.g., teachers, school children, local agencies, haulers, recyclers, legislators) to enlist their support for California's Zero Waste quest.

Grassroots Outreach

Grassroots outreach is designed to work in conjunction with existing statewide advertising campaigns. The objective of the grassroots outreach is to initiate contact on a one-on-one basis with local community representatives.

At the February 2003 communications workshop, participants proposed the rallying cry/slogan—“Zero Waste, You Make It Happen.” This slogan is used thematically in the following list of potential grassroots activities, which provides a palette of outreach concepts that could be pursued given the availability of funding and resources.

Through the Marketing Task Force, OPA will work to identify opportunities for grassroots outreach in conjunction with existing program and resources, including social marketing efforts previously approved by the Board.

1. Internship Outreach Program—This is a low-cost student utilization strategy where students can receive college credit from their local four-year university’s internship program. This strategy includes two primary teams supervised by Board staff. The teams will be dedicated to southern California and northern California respectively. The Long Beach office will serve as the primary reporting office for Southern California, while the Board’s office in Sacramento will serve as the primary reporting office for Northern California.

a. **Speakers Bureau for Schools**—Students will participate in career day and various environmental outreach events at public and private schools throughout California. Speaking engagements will offer an opportunity to speak to students and staff in an enclosed setting, and introduce the campaign “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen.” A leaflet will be sent home with students requesting that the student have their parents sign it indicating they have read the information provided on the leaflet that explains the campaign. Parents are encouraged to sign a pledge promising to buy recycled-content products at home and at work. The pledge will be designed as a multilingual, two-sided document.

b. **Phone Survey of Environmental Private Sector Organizations**—Students will participate in a bilingual phone survey to heighten awareness and stimulate conversation about recycled product procurement. Students will contact environmental and private sector organizations to determine if any of these agencies: (1) offer recycling on site, (2) have a buy-recycled policy, (3) have a price preference for recycled-content products, (4) would place a poster promoting the campaign “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen,” and (5) would be

interested in more information and/or a guest speaker. Organizations also will be asked to make a pledge to initiate a Zero Waste campaign.

- c. **Office Supply/Paper Distributors Customer Outreach and Contest**—Local retail distributors of office paper (e.g., Staples, Office Depot, Paper Plus) will be asked to participate in a Buy-Recycled/Zero Waste Campaign throughout California. Bilingual students will distribute information on recycled-content products and the concepts of Zero Waste to store clientele. A shopping list pad, consisting of a double-sided map (with bilingual text), will be developed by students in consultation with individual stores to help customers locate recycled-content products in the store. Students will also be responsible for placing customized “shelf-talkers” adjacent to products that contain recycled content. A contest box will be available at all checkout counters. Customers can enter a drawing if they purchase something with recycled content. The drawing prize will be provided by the store in a cooperative promotional campaign designed to include product manufacturers. This outreach effort could easily be tied to American Recycles Day or Earth Day events for maximum visibility and potential media coverage.

2. Local Grassroots Advertising Campaign Development

- a. **Ad Campaign Contest**—This outreach program for California schools will provide a venue for new and creative ideas as students are encouraged to develop two comprehensive newspaper/bus ad/truck signage/poster/brochure art campaigns—one in English and one in Spanish (or any other locally identified second language in the given community). Students may participate if they are enrolled full-time at any California university, college, or junior college. Contest winners will be honored at a campaign kick-off (media event), and will earn college credit for their participation through their school’s internship program.
- b. **Public Service Announcement**—This local outreach program will enlist the support of local cable companies throughout California, and in doing so, provide an opportunity to introduce a new Environmental-Zero Waste award at the Annual National Cable Television Association (NCTA) awards banquet. Contestants will submit their entries in the category Environmental PSA. As part of their local franchise agreement, local cable companies with public access

facilities are always looking for new projects for their public access volunteers. This outreach strategy provides an excellent incentive for the cable company and its volunteers to gain local visibility for their entries, and receive statewide and national recognition should they be selected as finalists. The award will be presented at the Annual National Cable Television Association awards banquet. The award will be made of recycled-content materials and provided by the CIWMB.

3. Media Events at Local Recycling Centers—Media events will be staged in both southern and northern California to promote the “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen” campaign theme. This outreach effort will provide an opportunity to tour a local recycling facility and/or a manufacturing plant that utilizes recycled-content feedstock. This will serve as an educational experience for community members and the media, and will increase visibility of these operations in the community. A media reception/event provides an opportunity to welcome the media along with special guests where the issues of environmental justice, sustainability, and the buy recycled theme can be promoted. Media events are recommended at the following facilities: drop-off centers, recycling centers, materials recovery facilities, and manufacturing facilities utilizing recycled-content material in their production process.

4. Board-Sponsored Outreach Activities—The Board will continue to increase outreach activities for bilingual communities while focusing on the campaign theme “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen” at environmental and business fairs throughout the state. Promotional materials and literature will be distributed that incorporate the campaign theme.

5. Promotional Materials—Promote the purchase of recycled-content products and incorporate the “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen” campaign theme. To illustrate, the recommended bilingual materials for Outreach Strategy 1C (cited above) would include (1) gummed shopping list (with recommendations for purchasing recycled products), and (2) buttons for retail sales staff. The printed message on both items would read: “Ask Us About Recycled Products,” or alternately, “Zero Waste!”

- 6. Board Member and Staff Speakers Bureau**—Speaking opportunities promoting “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen” will be promoted when Board Members and staff are speaking to the private sector, local government, and the general public.
- 7. Media Outreach**—The promotion of “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen” will be incorporated in press releases and opinion/editorials for bilingual and mainstream periodicals and trade journal media placement, while citing quotations from Board Members on the subject. Recommendations include: press releases, opinion/editorials, and letters to the editor.
- 8. Chamber of Commerce Outreach**—Local promotional campaigns for “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen” will be conducted at local and statewide chamber of commerce events. Opportunities for outreach will include: (1) environmental committee meetings, (2) general mixers/luncheons, and (3) statewide conferences. CIWMB will develop a PowerPoint presentation, pamphlets and/or CD with contact information, and provide the PowerPoint presentation to chamber of commerce members so they may present it to their business partners and staff.
- 9. Speakers Bureau for the Environmental Media Association of Los Angeles**—A partnership opportunity exists with the Environmental Media Association of Los Angeles (EMA) to promote the “Zero Waste, You Make It Happen” campaign, and other sustainability issues and goals. Staff will coordinate opportunities for speaking engagements and outreach activities with EMA in an attempt to bring the “Zero Waste” message to television situational-comedy scriptwriters.
- 10. Videoconferencing**—At the May 13, 2003, Sacramento Board meeting, IMB and OPA jointly developed and hosted the first-ever videoconference of a Board meeting, enabling 100 constituents to watch locally and 40 community members to testify live from Southern California. The videoconference was a resounding success, especially in the community. There have already been numerous requests by other Board constituent groups to continue to provide this capability. Workshops, LEA trainings, and RMDZ loan program now have the ability to use this newest Board tool.

- 11. Partnering with Corporate America**—Leverage the resources and media relationships built by high-dollar ad campaigns to promote Board activities and programs.

Miscellaneous Recommendations

Several other concepts have evolved in the course of work on this communication strategy that OPA believes would enhance the Board's communication and outreach efforts.

- **Public Forum and Panel Discussions**—Ongoing, statewide public forums and panel discussions with partners from Cal/EPA agencies (five in Northern California and five in Southern California) will be planned to present and promote the concept of a sustainable California.
- **International Waste Management Forum**—OPA recommends organizing an international waste management forum to be held in Los Angeles or San Francisco to discuss global waste management issues. The purpose of this venue is to share knowledge and information with officials from the UK and Europe and introduce how their disposal and recycling practices may be beneficial in California.
- **Travel Calendar**—On many occasions, staff from other Board offices and divisions attend many of the same events OPA is involved in. By creating an outreach calendar, OPA could host a one-stop site to determine the exhibit and travel plans of all Board staff and more effectively coordinate outreach efforts in the field.

Appendix A

Strategic Plan Goals

Improved and focused communication is crucial to successful implementation of the Board's 2001 Strategic Plan, which serves as the foundation for the 2003-2004 Communications Strategy and Outreach Plan. Designed to prioritize the Board's resources and funding over the next five to 10 years, the Strategic Plan embraces the following specific goals:

1. To increase participation in resource conservation, integrated waste management, waste prevention, and product stewardship to reduce waste and create a sustainable infrastructure.
2. Assist in the creation and expansion of sustainable markets to support diversion efforts and ensure that diverted materials return to the economic mainstream.
3. Educate the public to better understand and participate in resource conservation and integrated waste management strategies.
4. Manage and mitigate the impacts of solid waste on public health and safety and the environment, and promote integrated and consistent permitting, inspection, and enforcement efforts.
5. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Integrated Waste Management Board in pursuit of its mission.
6. Continuously integrate environmental justice concerns into all of the Board's programs and activities, including administrative and budgetary decisions.
7. Promote a "zero waste California" where the public, industry, and government strive to reduce, reuse, or recycle all municipal solid waste materials back into nature or the marketplace in a manner that protects human health and the environment and honors the principles of California's Integrated Waste Management Act.

Appendix B

Existing OPA Efforts

	OPA	Exec.	Web	BdNet
Media Tracking				
Printed News Clips Collected			X	
<i>News Clips - Automatic Weekly Email to Board Members & Exec.</i>		X		
Broadcast - Radio News			X	
Broadcast - TV News			X	
<i>Video Clips - Automatic Weekly Email to Board Members & Exec.</i>		X		
Video - PSA (:10/:30/:60 spot)			X	X
Video - Training Workshop			X	X
Video – Educational			X	X
<i>Video - Automatic Weekly Email to Board Members & Exec.</i>		X		
Speech/Talking Points (post event)	X		X	X
PowerPoint Presentations (post event)	X		X	X
Photo Archive - Digital Images (ongoing by subject matter)	X		X	X
Press Events - Program Promotion	X			
Marketing				
Articles - By Board Staff	X	X	X	X
Articles - By Board Members	X	X	X	X
Articles - OPA (Editorials)	X	X	X	X
<i>Articles- Automatic Weekly Email to Board Members & Exec.</i>		X		
Board Sponsored Events	X	X	X	X
Board Sponsored Conferences	X	X	X	X
Board Sponsored Workshops	X	X	X	X
Advertising - Image/Board	X	X	X	X
Advertising - Program Specific (by program & comprehensive search)	X	X	X	X
Approval Process Tracking	X			

	OPA	Exec.	Web	BdNet
<i>Partnerships</i>				
Environmental Groups	X			
Local Jurisdictions	X			
Industry	X			
<i>Publications Tracking</i>				
Fact Sheets	X			
Brochures	X			
Posters	X			
Other	X			
<i>Outreach Tracking</i>				
Premiums	X			
Publications for Outreach Events	X			
Events - Internal Sponsorship	X			
Events - External Sponsorship	X			
Event Requests - Staffed	X			
Event Requests - Unstaffed	X			
All Event Requests	X			
<i>Editorial Services</i>				
Editorial Services	X			
Approval Process Tracking	X			
<i>Graphics Tracking</i>				
Design Jobs	X			
Printing Jobs	X			
Custom Art (referenced to publication number and by subject)	X		X	X
Approval Process Tracking	X			
<i>Ombudsman Services</i>				
Incoming Requests	X			
<i>Small Business Liaison Services</i>				
Incoming Requests	X			